



“Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go.”

¹ And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. ² And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. (Ex 5:1-2)

Government by men is raw force and understands no influence but an opposing force. But government by men is blind to God. It does not know the God of Joseph, of Abraham, of Isaac, or of Jacob. It only knows how far its fist will extend to suppress and to oppress. It is for this reason that godless governments are totalitarian – there is no restraining moral force.

So, Moses and Aaron go boldly to Pharaoh equipped with neither sword nor shield except that of the Word of the Lord (and that is always enough). God’s ministers never speak for themselves, but only as emissaries of God: *“Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go.”* God begins His warnings to Pharaoh with only a mild demand – *“that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.”* The most important thing, however, to the people of God is to worship the Lord and to feast upon His Word. The demand is fair and not at all presumptuous; however, God knows that Pharaoh will reject the warning and request. It reveals Pharaoh to be a totally unreasonable and unyielding monarch. That is the intention of God in making the simple demand. He reveals, step by step, the iniquity of world rulers. He allows their iniquity to grow by measure until it is so full that there is no question in the minds of men that the coming judgment is just.

This principle of God is illustrated in God’s vision to Abram: *“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation*

they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Gen 15:13-16) The Amorites were in Canaan and lived as a wicked nation; however, their iniquity was not yet so full that God would bring an unrelenting judgment against them. He waits, as He did with old Israel, until the coming wrath of God is so well justified that none can question. Perhaps God is waiting and striving with America today. When our wickedness has grown to such proportions as judgment is unquestionably warranted, then shall the Hammer of the Lorde fall upon a land once most beloved and most blessed by His Grace.

Are we surprised at the response of mammon in the person of Pharaoh? The demands of God carry little meaning to the minds of rulers and nations who have turned from God, or never knew Him. *"And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."* Pharaoh actually had a better excuse to reject God than America today since he had never known Him, but woe to that nation that has known God, and been richly blessed by His bountiful blessings – and THEN turn away from Him.

"And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." (Ex 5:3) In the normal course of events, the innocent of a nation suffer along with the wicked, under God's judgment, since they have pitched their tents among them; however, Israel will forego the final and permanent judgment of God against Egypt by the symbolic blood of Christ in the Pascal Lamb.

And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words. (Ex 5:4-9)

There is never a hint of mercy from the hand of the despot. Instead of relenting to the will of God, Pharaoh doubles down on the Children of Israel. It was by means of this gradualism against God that school prayer was disallowed in public education despite the guarantees for the same incorporated in the very first of the Ten Amendments of the Bill of Rights. Both Judiciary and Executive branches combined to re-write the provisions of that guarantee, so wisely placed there, by the Founding Fathers, while Congress stood by and did nothing.

"So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. And the taskmasters hasted them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?" (Ex 5:12-14) The people come under severe persecution and, though at first inclined to follow the lead of Moses, begin to question the wisdom of confronting Pharaoh. It is when men first begin to question the Will of God that nations get into trouble.

There was not provision in the monarchy of Egypt for the redress of grievances. Instead, troubles and hardships were all the more heaped upon the shoulders of the oppressed. *"Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people."* (Ex 5:15-16) The leaders of the Hebrew people were not aware that Pharaoh knew of the

greater demands placed on them - while it was he who issued the orders.

So what is the response of government to Godly demands? *"But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the LORD. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task."* (Ex 5:17-19) The devil will never ease your burden, and neither will unrighteous leaders. Will the people now realize that their only hope is in God, or will they question God and His ministers?

"And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." (Ex 5:20-21) God has been the source of salvation for the Hebrews from famine. He placed them in the best portion of the land of Egypt, but He also allowed them to go into bondage to understand better the hopelessness and bland diet of the world compared to His immeasurable riches for His people. They have learned of physical bondage, now they shall learn, at Sinai, of spiritual bondage.

When the people of the church murmur against her pastor, the pastor may be led to question his understanding of God. *"And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."* (Ex 5:22-23) When things do not go OUR way, we first question the Lord (as if we knew better than Him). That was the approach Moses took. He expected instant gratification in response to the commands of the Lord to him, but that was not the result. When we undertake to follow the Lord, or to minister for Him, we can expect untold reverses; but the Lord has His WAY and it shall be the GOOD and RIGHT Way at last. *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."* (Isaiah 55:8) Man's vision extends only to the near horizon while the vision of God extends from one end of the Universe to the outer limits of the other, and from Eternity Past to Eternity Future. So we must place our trust, hope, faith, and patience in God. He will bring all things to a perfect resolution in His own Divine Time.